Ombudsman asks Frontex to ensure respect for migrants’ fundamental rights during ‘debriefing’ interviews

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The Ombudsman has asked the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) to do more to ensure the fundamental rights of irregular migrants are respected during debriefing interviews—interviews that gather information for risk analysis and identifying cross-border crime suspects.

She suggested Frontex make sure interviewees receive information about their rights as well as access to interpretation and to an independent complaints mechanism.

Frontex should also insist that operational plans for any joint border management operation in a Member State include access to legal aid.

To guarantee that debriefing interviews are voluntary, Frontex should ensure interviewees’ consent is recorded, interviewees or their legal representatives sign a record of the interview, and that this recording be treated as confidential.

The Ombudsman had opened this inquiry in response to a complaint that raised concerns about debriefing interviews during a Frontex joint operation in Spain.